

AN: This is the most exciting entry of *Poison* yet, in my opinion. It's time for some real action – and even more drama! Aren't you fangirls lucky? Enjoy!

Poison

Cookie

"Jesus..."

Wazimu stared in amazement at the lab presented before him. The equipment was far more advanced than anything he'd ever worked with in a lab before. Sure, the place needed a little bit of tidying up – but this was the type of stuff he only dreamed of using.

And it was all here. Ready for the picking.

"I've never been in a lab like this before," Wazimu said, turning to Death, who was stood behind him. "It's so advanced..."

"But you are familiar with this equipment, yes?" presumed Death, raising his eyebrows at the chemist.

"Oh, yeah," said Wazimu, his eyes still wide. "I'm familiar with it."

He recognised all of the equipment present. Even knew how to use it. He just never had the chance to before.

"And it's all yours," Death told him. "As long as you adhere to your quota."

Wazimu glanced aside, mulling over the proposition that Death had given him. It was simple enough. All he had to do was produce Sumu for him. And he was told that the pay would be very great indeed.

That was what tempted him the most. With his high skill set, didn't he *deserve* a high salary? It had to be his destiny. His true calling in life.

Still, he was getting involved in the actual manufacture of Sumu: the most deadly drug in the world. That couldn't be morally acceptable... Not in any case.

But then Wazimu didn't care. After all, it was only being used to fuel the habits of the users. Those people were scum. They were throwing their lives away. They deserved to have health problems and to die a slow, painful death.

He could do that. He could kill those worthless sacks of slime. And make money from it.

"How much is it?" Wazimu asked, staring into Death's red eyes. For some reason, he didn't feel afraid of him. "If I make Sumu for you, how much do I get paid?"

"Three million per month," Death replied, much to Wazimu's surprise.

"But... but that's hundreds of thousands more than I make now," he said, dumbstruck. "Why on earth—"

"It's an expensive business," Death interrupted. "I have to keep my staff well paid when they're being placed at such risk. Anything could happen."

"Looks safe enough down here," Wazimu muttered. The lab seemed pretty contained. And it was in the middle of a desert; hardly anyone was going to come looking for it. What did he have to worry about? He could just cook Sumu and then go home. Easy. "And it's not like I'm going to cause any trouble."

"Then do we have a deal?" Death said, offering a paw for the chemist to shake.

Wazimu shook it without hesitation. "Yeah. Sure," he said. "What's the worst that could happen?"

Death chuckled, returning his paw to the floor. "I'm happy to hear that, Wazimu," he told him. "I'm sure you'll be a much more... stable member of staff here."

"Yeah," said Wazimu, smiling. "Yeah, I think I will."

"Excellent," said Death. "The kids love their cookies."

"Cookies?" Wazimu said.

"Slang term for a Sumu cook," Death explained.

"Oh." The chemist nodded. "I see. Well, I look cookies, too, so that makes sense."

"Then you'd better get to work," Death said with a smile. "*Cookie*."

"I hate this stuff," Sarafina said, spitting out a mouthful of toast onto her plate. "What the hell do you keep putting on it? Mustard?"

"It's called butter," TPYMK said, turning away from the sink where he'd been washing some plates. "Haven't you ever tried butter before?"

"No," Sarafina said. She then frowned at the detective. "And take that thing off. It looks ridiculous."

TPYMK glanced down at the pink flowery apron he was wearing. "What?" he said innocently. "There's nothing wrong with it."

"You look gay," Sarafina retorted. "Then again, what's new?"

"I still think you need to work on your attitude problem," TPYMK said, taking off his apron. He sat down at the kitchen table opposite the young lioness. "Still, one problem at a time. At least you're not a little druggie."

"And I don't have to listen to any of your stupid asshole comments anymore," Sarafina said, sounding relieved. "Thank God."

"You don't change much," TPYMK commented. "Even without drugs. Speaking of which, how are the cravings?"

"Not bad," Sarafina said with a shrug. "I still feel a little itchy now and again. Still, the more I eat, the sooner it goes away. Right now, I don't even feel like smoking a joint."

"You look healthier," TPYMK noticed, glancing at her forepaws. "Your claws are growing back."

"Yeah, well, I ain't getting them painted," Sarafina said with a smile. "I feel better, though. Definitely. I might even have a shower."

"Something that people should do every single day," TPYMK said. "Maybe then you'll stop smelling like a sewer."

"I've been occupied with other things at the moment," Sarafina said, glancing down at the bump on her stomach. It had grown a little bit in the past few days. She could only assume that it wouldn't be too long before the baby was born. "'Washing' hasn't really been at the top of my list."

"It wouldn't be at the top of mine, either," TPYMK said. "This damn Sumu business is getting worse. We need to catch whoever's behind it before it's too late."

"Search the guy, then," Sarafina said. "Someone called Death shouldn't be too hard to find."

"We'll see," TPYMK said. "It could be more difficult than you think."

"Well, we're not going to be able to do much about it unless we find him," Sarafina told the detective. "Otherwise we'll just keep going round in circles."

"We can't let that happen," TPYMK said. "We're so close, and yet so far away."

"That sucks," Sarafina said. "Last thing we need is more people getting on those drugs."

"Okay, now I've changed my mind," TPYMK said. "You *do* sound different. Weeks ago, you would've been snorting Sumu right up your nose."

"I'm a changed lioness," Sarafina declared. "I actually prefer chocolate milk to weed – and I never thought I'd say *that*."

"It's a good thing," TPYMK said. "Believe me, you're looking a lot better than you did a few days ago. Even with the pregnancy."

"It's better than being addicted," Sarafina said. "Or getting shot."

At that moment, a gunshot pierced the window.

"Huh?"

Bang!

"*Get down!*" TPYMK screamed, leaping on top of Sarafina as more gunshots burst through the window, scattering glass all over the kitchen.

"*What the hell is going on?*" Sarafina yelled over the noise. The sound of gunshots echoing all around them was hard to mistake for anything else. "*Why the hell are there gunshots?*"

"You tell me!" TPYMK shouted, his ears ringing because of the noise. "What the hell have you done?"

"*Me?*" exclaimed Sarafina. "I haven't done anything!"

"Knowing you, I seriously doubt that!" TPYMK retorted. "Now, let's get out of here!"

TPYMK dragged Sarafina to her paws, as another hail of bullets was directed their way. One scraped past the detective's shoulder.

"*Gah!*" He gritted his teeth, trying to ignore the pain. He just wanted to get out of the house. Before something worse happened. "Move it, Sarafina!"

"I'm *trying!*" she said over her shoulder. The detective was shoving her through a doorway which led to the living room. "What the hell is going on?"

"Just hurry up!"

TPYMK slammed the door shut. Gunshots could still be heard; the entire kitchen was probably being torn apart right now.

I'm going to have to move house again, he thought.

"Where am I going?" Sarafina asked.

"Where do you think?" TPYMK yelled in exasperation. "The front door! Jesus, haven't you ever been in a crisis before?"

"Well, excuse me for panicking!"

"Just move it!"

"All right!"

TPYMK and Sarafina rushed for the front door—

—just as something crashed through the window beside it.

It was small, and roundish, and green. Clattering across the floor.

TPYMK's eyes widened in horror.

It was a grenade.

"Run!"

TPYMK and Sarafina sprinted in the opposite direction.

The grenade exploded from behind.

The two of them were thrown forwards, arms and legs flailing. They crashed onto the floor, their faces smashing into the debris that was falling down all around them. More gunshots were ripping apart the walls and windows. Chaos was spreading throughout the house.

"*I wish I'd never met you!*" Sarafina screamed, her legs cut to pieces by the glass that was littering the floor. She scrambled to her paws, survival instincts kicking in. She had to get through this. Not just for her, but for the baby, too.

"*This is hardly the time for that now!*" TPYMK retorted, rushing after her.

Sarafina darted up a staircase, keeping her head down. TPYMK was doing the same thing, crouching low to avoid the risk of being shot. It wouldn't help if they threw more grenades in, however...

"This way!" TPYMK called, kicking open a door and racing through into an empty room. The detective never really had much use for it, since he didn't have the time to find furniture so guests could sleep there.

Sarafina followed him in. "Hey – why couldn't I sleep in this room?"

"Are you still talking about things that are irrelevant?" TPYMK snapped, pulling open the window at the far end of the room. "Now, you go first."

"Why?"

"Are you seriously complaining? Just get out!"

Sarafina did as she was told. She hauled herself out of the window, rolling onto a long ledge below.

She could see the backyard just ahead of her. It wasn't much. Just a long rectangular stretch of land with a swimming pool in the middle and some deckchairs scattered around it. She doubted that the detective ever went for a swim, though...

TPYMK climbed out of the window, joining Sarafina on the ledge. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," Sarafina said, ignoring the deep cuts on her legs. "What do we do now? It's too high."

"No, it's not," TPYMK said. "We just jump into the pool."

"Are you nuts?"

"Yes. Squirrels love me. Now, jump!"

TPYMK nudged Sarafina forwards, and they both leapt from the ledge together.

Splash!

The two landed in the pool, creating an explosive wave that splattered over the lawn, turning it slick and wet.

Sarafina emerged from the surface, shaking water from her fur. TPYMK was already tugging her towards the opposite end.

"Can't we rest for a minute?" she complained.

"No – they'll come around the back if they think we're not inside," TPYMK replied. "Hurry up!"

TPYMK was the first to pull himself out of the pool, standing up and adjusting the fedora on his head. He helped Sarafina out of the water, blood streaming down her legs thanks to the cuts she'd suffered.

"Come on!"

The two rushed towards the far end of the backyard. A wooden fence separated it from a forest beyond.

TPYMK vaulted the fence with ease, hoping that Sarafina would follow suite.

The lioness jumped up, grunting in clear agony as she struggled to climb over the fence. "Ow!"

"What's wrong?" TPYMK looked desperate to get away.

"I... can't... do it..." She was panting, exhausted and in pain.

"Goddamn it!"

TPYMK gently wrapped his arms around one of Sarafina's forelegs, helping her onto his back. He lowered her to the floor. "Okay, now?"

Sarafina managed a weak nod. She looked as though she was in agony.

TPYMK was already running into the forest, brushing aside low branches in order to get as far away from the house as possible.

Sarafina ambled after him, going at about half the pace of the detective. "Hey... wait... for.. me..."

TPYMK turned around, noticing that Sarafina was now just stumbling forwards. She wasn't picking up any speed.

"Sarafina!"

He rushed back over to her. "What is it? Are you all right?"

"Oh, God..." Sarafina was breathing heavily, clutching her bump with a paw. "It hurts... I think... I think..."

"What? You think what?" TPYMK said, frantic.

"The... the baby... I..."

Sarafina's eyes rolled into the back of her head, and she fainted.

TPYMK stared at her unconscious body. "Oh, great."

When Sarafina woke up, her vision felt blurry. And yet, strangely, she felt rather comfortable. After fainting earlier, she thought that she would wake up to see the eyes of some assassin looming over her.

However, she was in a bed.

A bed? she thought. She felt confused, and rather drowsy. *Haven't been in one of those for a while...*

The closest she'd come to a bed was sleeping on the sofa in TPYMK's living room. Somehow, though, she didn't think she'd see it ever again... Maybe the whole house being torn apart by gunfire and explosives had something to do with that.

The steady *beep-beep-beep* of a heart monitor finally made Sarafina fully alert.

"Huh?"

Her eyes were wide open. She soon realised that she was lying in a hospital bed.

This only made her even more bemused.

How long had she been here for? What had happened? Where was everyone?

Evening sunlight filtered in through the window. A cool breeze wafted over her face. It was a rather pleasant summer's night, all things concerned. She assumed that she had been unconscious for a good few hours. It was early in the morning when she and TPYMK had been trying to escape the house...

Where the hell is he, anyway? she wondered, staring at the door by the corner of the room. It was a rather small place; just enough for her bed, the equipment, and a small wooden chair beside it.

"*Mr ThatPersonYouMightKnow, you can't go in there!*" boomed a male voice from outside the room.

"*Yeah, whatever,*" muttered a familiar voice that made the lioness smile.

The door flung open, revealing TPYMK. He didn't look in the best state. Despite having dried off for the most part after their brief dive into the pool, there were still water stains all over his trenchcoat. There was also a long cut running down his cheek.

Still, he'd coped a lot better than Sarafina.

"Sarafina, are you all right?" He was at her side within seconds, staring into her eyes. He held one of her forepaws in his hand.

"Yeah, yeah," Sarafina mumbled. Her voice sounded hoarse. "I'm fine."

A lion stepped in after the detective, an expression of anger on his face. "How many times have we told you, Detective?" said the lion. "You have to wait outside until she stabilises!"

"Well, she's conscious now," TPYMK retorted. "And I have to talk to her. I know what doctors are like – they can't break bad news properly."

"What the hell's going on?" Sarafina asked. "I can't remember anything. We were running, and then... I just blacked out."

TPYMK bit his lip, showing signs of nervousness. "Sarafina... something happened while we were—"

"Hey," Sarafina cut in, staring down at her stomach. "I don't have a bump anymore."

It was true. Her stomach was slim again. No signs that she had ever been pregnant.

"You went into premature labour," the lion informed her. Sarafina noticed that he had a little ID tag pinned to his fur. He was called 'Dr. Mufasa'.

"*What?*" Sarafina was boggling at the lion. "What do you mean?"

"Your baby was born earlier than expected," Mufasa explained. "Seeing as you never came in for a consultation, I presume that you didn't even know when it was expected in the first place."

"Well... no," Sarafina said, suddenly feeling rather sheepish. "I didn't have time."

"We had to cut the baby out via caesarean section," Mufasa told her. "It was already in a bad state before we tried to operate on it."

"It was ill?" Sarafina sounded horrified.

"We detected high traces of illegal substances within both you and the baby," Mufasa said. "Most of its muscles had worn away, its brain was deformed, and it had severe blood poisoning."

"But... but it's okay now, right?" Sarafina asked hopefully. "You're looking after it, yeah?"

"Sarafina..." Now TPYMK was speaking. "The doctors tried their best, but... the baby didn't make it."

"We did everything we could," Mufasa said, "but the fact of the matter is that the drugs did enough damage. You were fine. You simply have a bad case of shock and exhaustion. Your baby's injuries were far more serious, however. There was barely any chance of survival. I'm sorry."

"No..." Sarafina looked down, tears streaming from her eyes. "No... My baby's gone... My baby's dead..."

Her child was no more. In just a matter of hours, her only chance of a family had been snuffed out in an instant. All because of her foolishness.

All because of the drugs.

"Sarafina—"

"*No!*" The lioness was kicking and screaming, pounding whatever she could with her paws. "*No! No! No! No! No!*"

She was sobbing uncontrollably, taking her anger out on everything. "*I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!*" She wasn't even screaming at anyone in particular.

"*Everything's gone! Everything's... It's all gone...*"

She stared downwards, sobbing, defeated.

TPYMK simply looked on with concern.

There was no telling what this had done to the lioness.

The effects could kill.

To Be Continued...

AN: Phew! That was a pretty hectic chapter, wasn't it? But exhilarating to write! In fact, I will say it was awesome!

Looks like I've left you on another cliffhanger... Sarafina has lost her baby. Such a shame. However, it's not the end of the world – except for her, maybe... I shall say nothing, except that I will see you next time!